

In this lab, we will learn to use the following:

1. Implement recursive functions
2. Calculate GCD

In this lab, we are going to calculate the greatest common divisor (or GCD) of two integers, using a 2300 year old algorithm.

To compute the  $\text{GCD}(a,b)$ , this algorithm first writes  $a = b * q + r$  where  $0 \leq r < b$  (as guaranteed by the Division Theorem). Next, repeat this by setting  $a = b$  and  $b = r$  until  $r = 0$ . Once  $r = 0$ , the last value for  $b$  is the GCD.

Here's the algorithm that makes it work.

function nonRecursiveGCD(a,b):

repeat until  $r = 0$

$r = a \% b$

$a = b$

$b = r$

Here's an example. Let's find the  $\text{GCD}(285, 255)$

$$285 = 255 * 1 + 30$$

$$255 = 30 * 8 + 15$$

$$30 = 15 * 2 + 0$$

The final value of  $b$  was 15, so the  $\text{GCD}(285, 255) = 15$ .

It follows from the fact that if  $a = b * q + r$ , then  $\text{GCD}(a,b) = \text{GCD}(b,r)$ . This is what makes the recursive function work so well. In the previous problem,

$$\text{GCD}(285, 255) = \text{GCD}(255, 30) = \text{GCD}(30, 15)$$

Here's another example. Find the  $\text{GCD}(110,42)$ .

$$110 = 42 * 2 + 26 \implies \text{GCD}(110,42) = \text{GCD}(42,26)$$

$$42 = 26 * 1 + 16 \implies \text{GCD}(42,26) = \text{GCD}(26,16)$$

$$26 = 16 * 1 + 10 \implies \text{GCD}(26,16) = \text{GCD}(16,10)$$

$$16 = 10 * 1 + 6 \implies \text{GCD}(16,10) = \text{GCD}(10,6)$$

$$10 = 6 * 1 + 4 \implies \text{GCD}(10,6) = \text{GCD}(6,4)$$

$$6 = 4 * 1 + 2 \implies \text{GCD}(6,4) = \text{GCD}(4,2)$$

$$4 = 2 * 2 + 0 \implies \text{GCD}(4,2) = 2$$

Notice that we start with  $\text{GCD}(110,42)$ , which is unknown and finish with  $\text{GCD}(4,2) = 2$ , which can be used to substitute all the way back to get the answer for  $\text{GCD}(110,42)$ . That's recursion!

Your assignment: Write a recursive function that calculates the GCD.

When you're done, upload your .py file to D2L.

Hint: If your code is working correctly, your code will likely be short.